

First record of Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* for Ghana

Glen Valentine

Première observation de l'Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* au Ghana. Un Indicateur de Wahlberg *Prodotiscus regulus* a été observé le 13 décembre 2009 au Parc National de Mole, au centre-nord du Ghana. C'est la première donnée pour le Ghana, d'une espèce rarement observée en Afrique occidentale.

On 13 December 2009, at around 15.00 hrs on a partially cloudy afternoon, two Ashanti African Tours guides (W. Apraku and F. Ntakor), six tour participants and I were birding near the entrance gate in Mole National Park (c.09°16'N 01°51'W) when I spotted a Wahlberg's (Brown-backed) Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* in a small mixed-species flock. The bird was perched motionless and upright in a sparsely vegetated tree c.5 m off the ground and c.40 m away. I immediately recognised the species, which I am very familiar with from South Africa, where it is fairly common in KwaZulu-Natal and elsewhere. The bird flew a few metres to another perch, permitting observation of its distinctive white outer tail feathers. It was a small, mostly brown, flycatcher-like honeyguide. The bill was sharp, fairly short and fine (flycatcher-like), the back was all dull brown with mostly brown underparts, and a partially whitish lower belly. Unfortunately, the bird flew again and we were unable to re-locate it. No other member of the group had a convincing view, and we were unable to acquire photographs.

Thoma (2012) reported the first observations in Mali, and discussed the few other West African records. Although Thoma (2012) suggested the possibility that this species is a migrant in West

Africa, it seems more likely to be an easily overlooked bird that is very thinly distributed. The habitat at Mole, and that in which most other West African records of this species have been made, is dry woodland containing many of the tree species characteristic of Sudanian woodland (Dowsett-Lemaire & Dowsett 2008).

Acknowledgements

I thank Bob Dowsett for help with references, Ron Demey for reviewing the manuscript and providing a copy of the Thoma reference (then in press), and Nik Borrow for comments on this note.

References

- Dowsett-Lemaire, F. & Dowsett, R. J. 2008. The avifauna of Mole National Park, Ghana. *Malimbus* 30: 93–133.
- Thoma, M. 2012. First record of Wahlberg's Honeybird *Prodotiscus regulus* for Mali and its status in Western Africa. *Bull. ABC* 19: 66–68.
- Rockjumper Birding*, PO Box 13972, Cascades, 3202, South Africa. E-mail: guides@rockjumperbirding.com

Received 23 December 2011; revision accepted 15 May 2012.